CANADIAN Film Weekly
VOICE of the CANADIAN MOTION PICTURE INDUSTRY

Vol. 8, No. 29 TORONTO, JULY 14, 1943 $2.00 Per Annum

MPs Ask About NFB Rentals

Organizational Setup, Costs Queried in House of Commons

It would not be in the public interest to give figures of rentals received from motion picture theatres by the National Film Board because such information would be of value to competitors, War Services Minister LaFleche told the House of Commons in the course of a discussion which arose over one of six questions about the NFB asked by E. G. Hansell, member for Macleod, Vulcan, Alberta. The minister said that he was presenting the Board's point of view.

Mr. Hansell wanted to know

(Continued on Page 2)

MPTAO Mulls Future Plans

The Motion Picture Theatres Association of Ontario laid the groundwork for a definite plan and policy at a meeting in Hamilton last week at which 53 theatre men from that city and the surrounding district were present. Considerable discussion was devoted to what channels of theatre interest the organization should travel and an attempt will be made to settle

(Continued on Page 4)

Regal '43-'44 List Juicy

Regal Films, which releases Metro product in Canada, will have a heavy summer and fall program, judging by the present position of the studio. Of 42 musicals ready for release or in production, 14 are musicals, 13 war films, seven dramas, six comedies and one a spectacle.

Completed and awaiting release

(Continued on Page 7)

Chaplin's Frau

Because film audiences will want to see the new Mrs. Charlie Chaplin, Oona O'Neill's part in Gregor Rabinovitch's "Russian Girl" is being enlarged.

IATSE Warns Against Inexperienced Help

The IATSE has issued a warning against the employment of inexperienced help in theatre jobs involving an element of risk. In the latest issue of its official bulletin the alliance declared that as a result of wartime manpower shifts "we should take every conceivable precaution to protect public life and property." The warning was provoked by the alarming increase in USA theatre fires.

Billy Renominated

W. A. "BILLY" SUMMERVILLE

The popular veteran showman, who represented Riverdale Constituency, Toronto, in the recently-prorogued Ontario Legislature, is again the Progressive Conservative standard bearer in the forthcoming election. He served as alderman and controller in Toronto's City Council for many years before becoming a member of the Ontario house in 1937. Billy Summerville is a partner with Sam Bloom and Sam Fine in the operation of several theatres in the eastern section of Toronto and a member of the Motion Picture Pioneers. His friends in the industry wish him every success at the polls on August 4th.

Gem Theatre, Alta. Gets New Seats

The Gem Theatre, Fair View, Alberta, has installed 100 new seats. Manager Harry Bubel believes the new seats will help relieve heavy Saturday night trade.

Fat Shows Suspended

Fat shows are being discontinued until August or September because of hot weather conditions.

Broidy, Thomas Here

Steve Broidy, general sales manager of Monogram Films, and Harry Thomas, Eastern division chief, were in Toronto last week for a confab with Harry Kaufman, Canadian general manager. Kaufman left later for the West to talk 1943-44 sales policy with branch managers.

Ottawa Raises Parts Limit

New priority regulations issued by the Department of Munitions and Supply will make it easier for theatres to obtain material and parts for maintenance, repair and operation. The Priorities Branch has ruled these may be purchased to the amount of $150, although requests must be kept down to a minimum because of the scarcity.

The ruling applies to all busi-

(Continued on Page 3)

Hanson Reel 35% Canadian

The special edition of the Associated British News Reel, which will be distributed in Canada by Pioneer Films, will devote 35 per cent of its footage to the activities of Canadian men and women overseas. The rest will show the war effort of the British Isles and Empire countries.

The first release is slated for

(Continued on Page 3)

No Lives Lost in '42 Show Blazes

Although there were 180 million admissions to Canadian theatres in 1942, not one life was lost in a theatre fire. This is the proud record of Canadian theatres. The information was made available by the Dominion Fire Commissioner. In Canada during the last year 304 persons lost their lives through fire.

Fires in Canadian theatres during the year, however, which totalled 44, caused damages which amounted to $146,611. Ten of these broke out in projection rooms and cost the theatres $26,455. Though the number of fires was less by four than in 1941,

(Continued on Page 2)

RCAF Montreal Sees 'Air Force'

Warners "Air Force" premiere in Montreal was attended by Number Three Training Command Headquarters RCAF. The crack band from Number Five Manning Depot also participated in the proceedings. Aircraft plant executives and RCAF officers attended.

ARE YOU PLAYING
UNIVERSAL'S
CANADIAN BRITISH NEWS REEL

Film Weekly Vol. 8, No. 29 July 14, 1943
HYE BOSSIN, Managing Editor

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About the NFB

E. G. Hansell, member of the House of Commons for Macleod, Vulcan, Alberta, has asked the following questions, which have been passed. The answers will give theatre and exchange men some idea of the National Film Board's position in the Canadian motion picture industry:

1. What are the names of the members of the National Film Board?

2. What is the organizational set-up of the board; how many are employed, and in what position?

3. How many films have been released to (a) motion picture theatres; (b) for other uses?

4. How many films in the Canada Carries On series have been released up to the 31st May, 1943?

5. What remuneration has been received from motion picture theatres for use of films up to May 31st, 1943?

6. What is the total cost of the National Film Board, and its work for each year of its operation?

The statement of General LaFleche that "the National Film Board is in some respects in competition with commercial companies" is not being taken seriously by film men, who do not regard the NFB as a business rival. Distribution and exhibition men have given the NFB every co-operation and are only too pleased to play the Ottawa product, which is considered to be the best of its kind anywhere.

The NFB's admission that it is in commercial competition will make the answers interesting to the industry. Its representatives have been credited with statements and actions which indicate that the NFB would like some sort of governorship over certain phases of the business in Canada.

They Thank You

In a letter to this publication George C. Ganetakos, one of the best-known Canadian showmen, thanks the Canadian Motion Picture Industry for the service it rendered to the Greek War Relief Fund. The Quebec theatre man acted as chairman of the Central Executive Committee and B. C. Salamis, another prominent film figure from French Canada, assisted as secretary.

Writes Mr. Ganetakos:

"Our objective of half a million dollars has been surpassed, the success of which is due, to a great extent, to the splendid assistance of the Canadian Motion Picture Industry.

"We avail ourselves of this occasion to reiterate through you to the whole motion picture industry, the exhibitors and others who helped, our heartfelt appreciation.

"The people of Greece will never forget such noble acts and will always remember with gratitude the help given them in this moment of their greatest need."

The Greek War Relief Fund asked little enough and the knowledge that the drive was a success will bring great satisfaction to all Canadians, showmen or otherwise.

Commons Asks NFB Rentals

(Continued from Page 1)

how much the NFB got in rentals from theatres up to May 31, 1943. It appears now that the question will be among those answered, since it was passed on the order for return.

"The point is that the National Film Board is in some respects in competition with commercial companies," stated General LaFleche. "It is in the national interest that they have full right to make as good a bargain as they can, and they should not be put in a disadvantageous position by reason of information being made public."

The house leader of the Opposition, Gordon Graydon, member for Peel, Brampton, Ontario, provoked the discussion when he objected to General LaFleche's passing over the question with the explanation that the NFB's reasons for not answering had been explained privately. "This is a question in which the whole house is interested," he said. "I would ask the minister to indicate the special reasons for the reservation." On receiving the reasons, Mr. Graydon asked that the minister remove his reservation on the question, saying that "in the public interest" is being stretched too far.

"The minister," said Mr. Graydon, "is going entirely too far when he suggests that the National Film Board shall determine for the House of Commons and the Canadian people what information it is in the public interest to produce."

The Hon. R. B. Hanson described General LaFleche's explanation as "not good enough." "Who set up the National Film Board to say what is and what is not in the public interest?" he asked. "Parliament should decide that."

Mr. Hansell explained that he allowed the reservation under the impression that the information had been placed at the disposal personally of all the members.

Prime Minister Mackenzie King supported Mr. Graydon in raising the point he did and asking that the question should stand, saying that the minister might answer it later on his own responsibility.

Bing to Produce 'The Great John L'

A film based on the life of the famous boxer, John L. Sullivan, "The Great John L" will be produced by Bing Crosby, Frank Mastroly and Edward Grant, who wrote the original story, on a million dollar budget. Crosby is the chief backer. Actual production will start in four to six months.

No Fire Deaths In '42 Shows

(Continued from Page 1)

the fire loss that year resulting from 14 fires reached $12,011.

The total losses in assembly buildings, which included arenas, churches, dance halls, clubs and so on were $1,317,723. Theatre losses represent 11 per cent of the total.

The great interest of motion picture people in fire prevention is shown in the fact that Col. John A. Cooper, chairman of the Canadian Motion Picture Distributors, is president of the Dominion Fire Prevention Association. One of the chief speakers at the recent convention of the association was O. J. Silverthorne, head of the Ontario Motion Picture Bureau. The Motion Picture Theatres Association of Ontario recently joined the association. Theatre inspectors from every province attended and formed an association of their own.

Ontario theatres, working with the provincial department, have worked out extra safety methods and are using their screens to spread fire intelligence.

UA to Make Life Of Tchaikowsky

Film fans will be offered a film of the life of Tchaikowsky, famous Russian composer, to be produced by Vincent Youmans. The story is now being written and a releasing deal is being set with United Artists.

THE PICK OF THE PICTURES

Canadian Film Weekly
VOICE of the CANADIAN MOTION PICTURE INDUSTRY

REVIEWS INFORMATION RATINGS

Vol. 8, No. 29 COAST-TO-COAST COVERAGE July 14, 1943

U's 'Ice' KO, WB's 'Danger' OK

Hanson Reel 35% Canadian

(Continued from Page 1)

Thursday, July 22nd, and will be followed by regular issues on that same day each week. The negative will be flown from Britain to Montreal every week to make sure of uninterrupted general release.

Oscar Hanson, head of Pioneer Films, has received approving letters from a number of Canadian organizations and some newspapers have printed letters of praise for the idea from subscribers.

Canadian editions of the four news reels in distribution right now, made by American companies, contain 25 per cent of British and Canadian matter. This is because Ontario insists on that proportion and the reels built accordingly are distributed throughout the Dominion. The creation of a specially-tailored reel was due to the complaints of theatre-goers about the almost 100 per cent American content of such subjects. The Hanson venture will take care of any dissatisfaction still remaining.

News reels being currently distributed in Canada are issued twice each week in the case of two of the companies and once each week by the rest.

Crawford to WB

Joan Crawford has been assigned by Warners to an exclusive long-term contract. The Marrita Wolfe best-seller, "Night Shift," will be her first film for the company. She was previously under contract to MGM.

Britain Plans Big War Film

A film on the exploits and history of the British army is being planned by the British government and will probably be the biggest production ever made by a government organization. At the request of the British War Office, Major David Niven's appearance in the film has been okayed by Samuel Goldwyn who holds him under exclusive contract. Eric Ambler will do the story and Carol Reed will direct. Present plans call for international release.

'Hit the Ice' Will Heat Boxoffice 'Background to Danger' Thriller

HIT THE ICE
UNIVERSAL
(Running Time: 81 Minutes)

Abbott keeps walloping Costello and both keep walloping the boxoffice. That's a winning parlay that seems to go on forever. When the boys first bust the BO wide open the wise ones shook their heads and predicted public revulsion shortly. But no. The team, doing everything every slapstick comedian ever did on the screen before them and exchanging familiar dialogue, has a hold on the international funnybone that is as secure as the bite of the British bulldog. The audience leaves home laughing and comes home the same way.

Now the boys are back in "Hit the Ice" and it's one of their best. As in other pictures not a second is wasted that will yield a laugh and though the story may slow down the boys never do.

This time the team are street photographers who work with a stickup mob unknowingly and are sought by the police. The mob hides out in Sun Valley and the boys go there to try for evidence that will clear them. Leader of the mobsters, Sheldon Leonard, pretends to be sick and goes to the resort with his doctor, Patric Knowles, and his nurse, Elyse Knox. Doctor and nurse, unaware of the true nature of their patient, provide the romance.

After the first reel, when the boys move toward Sun Valley, the picture takes on entertainment strength and production power. Ginny Simms is at the resort and she sings four new songs. Johnny Long and his Orchestra pep up things and they're assisted by Helen Young, Gene Williams and The Four Teens.

Joseph Sawyer and Marc Lawrence support Leonard as henchmen.

With Abbott and Costello riding on the wave of popularity, this effort should get plenty of playing time and strong business. The boys have the inside track to the boxoffice and will prove it again by riding another winner.

BACKGROUND TO DANGER
VITAGRAPH
(Running Time: 80 Minutes)

This is a nip-and-tuck tale all the way between the bad guys and the good ones, its only plot novelty being the uncertainty for considerable of the footage about who is on our side and who isn't.

The scene is neutral Turkey, hotspot of intrigue by agents of every country. George Raft seems to get himself involved innocently in some dirty doings by helping a lady in distress. The lady, Osa Massen, is being hounded on every side and asks Raft to help her retain her papers. Raft, having become the object of attention, displays American stubbornness by refusing to yield to the third-degree tactics of his captors.

The lady who involved Raft has been killed and he refuses to deliver her papers to the Nazis, who reveal that she was one of their agents. The papers are forged copies of a trumped-up plan about a Russian invasion of Turkey, the revelation of which is supposed to push Turkey in on the Axis side. Behind the scheme is Sydney Greenstreet, chief Nazi representative, who fights a personal and political duel with Raft.

Raft has been rescued by Peter Lorre and Brenda Marshall, Soviet agents, who are trying to beat the Nazis to the phoney plans. Raft, you will probably guess, is an American agent. In the end he cements Russian-American relations by taking up with Miss Marshall, the latter being entitled to some sort of standout footage, having been nowhere in the running up to then.

Raft, Greenstreet and Lorre present their customary characterizations as excellently as ever, which means much here.

"Background to Danger" is a paper chase with strong names and situations of proved popularity. There are plenty of heavies on hand to provide that feeling of impending doom, among them Turhan Bey, Frank Puglia, Kurt Katch and Daniel Ocko.

Ottawa Raises Parts Limit

(Continued from Page 1)

nesses and under the Program Classification System purchase orders for the motion picture industry must carry the symbols M.RO. —P.SC. 23.

Part of the Orders read:

"Maintenance" and/or "Repair" mean the minimum upkeep necessary to continue or to restore a plant or equipment in sound working condition; provided that it shall NOT include the improvement of any plant or equipment by replacing material which is still usable, with material of a better kind, quality or design.

"Operating Supplies" means any materials which are normally carried by a person as operating supplies according to established accounting practice.

The terms "Maintenance", "Repair" and "Operating Supplies" shall include any materials not exceeding $150.00 in laid-down cost for any one complete addition ordinarily acquired by the user as a capital asset, and subject to annual depreciation in the user's established method of bookkeeping; provided that materials for any "one complete addition" aggregating more than $150.00 in laid-down cost shall not be divided for the purpose of coming within this definition.

The term "one complete addition" includes a group of items customarily purchased together with all items which would normally be purchased as part of a single project or plan.

Record Holiday Biz Across the Line

Moving picture attendance on a country-wide basis made a new high record for the three-day holiday over the fourth in the U.S. It was some 28 per cent higher than the corresponding period a year ago and was larger than for any of the same three days, Saturday to Monday inclusive, for this period in the history of the movies.

As an example, Radio City Music hall reported that all Fourth of July records in its 10-year history were shattered.

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Ann Corio

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Those Cute Kids

Mickey Goldin, manager of the Vogue, Vancouver, made the public prints the other day about the whys and wherefors of juvenile patrons. The column "After Dark," conducted in the Vancouver Sun by First Nighter, reports Mickey's reflections:

"One of the lesser-known problems of theatre managers is the handling of youngsters who attempt to crash their shows when the gamins and the movie bosses know that the hours are strictly on the wrong side.

"Some of the small characters entice older customers to act as their patrons, while others come fully armed with notes to prove that their desire to see the show has been approved by their parents.

"Mickey Goldin of the Vogue has made a collection of the appeals mothers have made to him to allow their children to see films at times when they should be at school.

"They range from mothers declaring that the family is leaving town in a few days, so little Oscar would like to gawk at movie actors instead of arithmetic books to parents who report that they've just moved into the city and until things become settled, young Ermintrude would like to soothe her nerves by being admitted to see some refreshing movie scenes.

"Mickey has gathered that apparently a large number of families are on the move in Vancouver and he has his suspicions as to the authenticity of the notes. In some cases the writing has led him to believe that the canny urchins have concocted the epistles themselves."

* * *

Short Throws

Keith Wilson, who used to manage theatres before joining the provincial police, has resigned from the law and order boys and is in uniform, he being attached to the department dealing with entertainment for the troops at the Ex. Can't stay out of show business. . . . A novel movie house is Island Park, on the docks at Port Carling, Muskoka, which is operated by the Temple brothers, George and Harold. Runs every night during the summer. The boys do painting, decorating, boat-building and renting, as well as being experienced projectionists. I had some fun with them on my vacation. . . . Art Arthur back in Hollywood on a 21-day leave, after spending several months in a couple of military hospitals. The ex-Toronto newspaperman and Hollywood scenarist fell into a tank trap. "I'm going to tell the general," he wrote, "to keep his trap shut from now on!" Yeah? I'd like to see you do it!

* * *

That'll L'arn Him

Al Perly, Midtown manager, is one of the most considerate managers in the business. He does everything possible to keep waiting patrons happy.

Whenever Al spots some handicapped person in line he ushers them in ahead of the others. Last week a lady who was stout in an unusual way attracted his attention. Perley spoke to her.

"Madam," he said, "I presume you are expecting. If you care to step out of line I will be pleased to admit you to the theatre now." The crowd noticed the gesture appreciatively. But the lady didn't care for it.

"I want you to know," she said sarcastically and with a look that meant that she understood Perley's implication, "that I am not expecting anyone!"

Mr. Perley turned the colors of the spectrum and slunk away while the crowd laughed.

MPTAO Mulls Future Plans

(Continued from Page 1)

the direction at the next executive meeting.

The meeting heard O. J. Silverthorne, head of the Ontario Motion Picture Bureau, praise exhibitors for the part they are playing in the war effort and praise the association for its wholehearted co-operation with his department and its representatives. It was the first time, he pointed out, that any such organization had proved itself of constant and distinct service to the provincial government.

The association has been assisting the Farm Commando Brigade campaign, prevailing on theatre and exchange workers to register and boosting the idea to the public. Syd Taube, secretary of the MPTAO, introduced Farm Commando officials to movie tieup methods, arranging space for the campaign in several windows on Yonge street, Toronto's main thoroughfare.

The meeting was opened by George Stroud of Hamilton, who turned the chair over to Taube. Others who spoke were H. Braden, Sr., A. Stack, H. Soloman, Joe Paul, Mr. Purvis, Tom Naylor, Walter Helm and E. Moule.

Representatives were present from Hamilton, Preston, Kitchener, Tillsonburg, Waterloo, Galt, Port Colborne, Welland, Guelph, Simcoe, St. Catharines, Brantford, Woodstock, Niagara Falls and Stratford.

New theatres which have joined the association are the Regent, Collingwood; Esquire, Southampton; Mayfair, Toronto; Capitol, Meaford; Gayety, Collingwood; Berford, Wiarton; Westboro, Ottawa; Delaney's, Gananoque; Empire, Thessalon; and Westdale, Hamilton.

Close OWI Office

The Motion Picture Bureau of the USA Office of War Information, Hollywood section, has been closed by chief Elmer Davis. There has been constant bickering between OWItes and film men.

Lightstone, Barron To Para Pow-Wow

Gordon Lightstone, Canadian general manager of Paramount Pictures in Canada, and Win Barron, in charge of public relations, are in New York attending the Paramount Convention being held at the Hotel Pierre.

Paramount division and district managers from coast to coast are attending the convention as well as all district advertising representatives throughout the United States.

IT'S ALWAYS FAIR WEATHER WHEN GOOD SHOWMEN AND GOOD SHOWS GET TOGETHER!

THE Paramount Picture

EXTRA
PLAYING TIME IS THE ORDER OF THE DAY WITH PARAMOUNT PRODUCT!

VOL. 2 (ADVT.) The Lowdown on the Production and Distribution of the Best Shows in Town! NO. 1

Technituneful 'Dixie' BO Cinch

The 'Bell' Rings At Long Last

After almost three years of preparation and production, the long-awaited world premiere of "For Whom the Bell Tolls" will take place at the Rivoli Theatre in New York City on Wednesday evening, July 14, Barney Balaban, president of Paramount Pictures, announced.

The New York engagement of the screen version of Ernest Hemingway's epic novel will be the only showing in the New York area this year.

Gary Cooper and Ingrid Bergman head the cast of "For Whom the Bell Tolls," which is the most ambitious undertaking in Paramount's history.

Mr. Balaban also disclosed that "For Whom the Bell Tolls" will be shown at the Rivoli on a two-a-day, reserved seat policy. Advanced prices, $1.10 to $2.20, evenings, and $1.10 to $1.65, matinees will be in effect. Paramount has leased the Broadway house and will operate it for the length of the picture's engagement.

Public Will Love Bing Crosby's Sentimental Saga of Minstrelsy

Paramount, in making "Dixie," has used a subject that enjoys the greatest interest and affection from the people of this continent and presents one of the screen's most popular figures, Bing Crosby, as the show world's most popular figure, the minstrel man. The minstrels provided the only theatre form originated on this continent and they are as deep in the heart of the entertainment public as baseball is to sport fans. Old as the subject is, it is almost an original one for the screen, never having been treated in the fashion it deserves until now.

The studio gave it its due, making a picture that has something for everyone and protecting the exhibitor by including every element of proved popularity at the boxoffice. Fitting into the current musical boom perfectly, it has:

Star Power because of Bing Crosby, Dorothy Lamour, Billy de Wolfe, Marjorie Reynolds, Lynn Overman, Eddie Foy, Jr., and many others.

Technicolor of the finest kind.

A Fine Love Story of an unusual nature.

Sentiment for those who love the familiar old songs.

Music made up of brand new tunes by crack songwriters to add to songs of timeless quality.

Escape in a believable way from the strain of war.

Production on a glorious scale.

Can any exhibitor ask for a better boxoffice guarantee?

LADD-'CHINA' ACE DRAW

The Alan Ladd-"China" combo continues to do outstanding business across the country. Still in the key centres, "China" is showing its pulling power by the boxoffice grosses it is piling up in every situation. Ladd is now the top BO booster in the business.

Para Folk Are A Busy Bunch

BOB HOPE turned down half a million dollars in contracts during the last year in order to make appearances at Army camps and in behalf of the Treasury Department.

CLAUDETTE COLBERT, who has just completed a starring role as an Army nurse in the Philippines in "So Proudly We Hail," has donated a gold medal which will be presented to the best Filipino soldier now training in Southern California.

FRANK ALBERTSON, having received his discharge from the U.S. Army, has returned to Hollywood and has resumed his acting career as Dorothy Lamour's small town fiance in "And the Angels Sing." Incidentally, Albertson was married recently at Santa Barbara to Grace Gillern, M-G-M contract player.

JAMES MILLICAN, tall, blond screen newcomer from the New York stage, will have an important role in "The Story of Dr. Wassell."

Paramount's Prize Technicolor Musical Is "Dixie"

Those who have seen "Dixie" have pronounced it the finest film of its kind ever made. Above you see Bing Crosby, Dorothy Lamour and Billy de Wolfe in a few fast peeps from the production. In terrific Technicolor and loaded with Crosby-sung tunes of new and historic popularity, "Dixie" is the story of black-faced minstrelsy from its beginnings. Lavish, beautiful, star-studded, entertaining and full of heart-warming music and laughter, "Dixie" is boxoffice stuff of the most genuine kind.

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MISS V FROM MOSCOW
Lola Lane
She had a date with destiny

•

LADY FROM CHUNGKING
Anna May Wong
China's first lady of the screen

•

BOSS OF BIG TOWN
John Litel, Florence Rice, H. B. Warner
Of vital interest to every Canadian. Food racketeering makes tense and timely drama

•

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Financial Post Checks Show Biz

The Financial Post of Toronto recently made a survey of the present state of the Canadian Motion Picture Industry, in which it pointed out that while attendance had increased by 10 per cent and receipts by 13 per cent, there was a marked cut in profits because of increased taxes.

The Post devoted considerable space to the war effort of the Industry in Canada. Below are some of its observations:

CANADA is going to the movies in a big way these days. Rain or shine, new taxes or not, more and more people are lining up at the ticket wickets of the picture houses—10 per cent more in 1942 than in 1941, and more so far in 1943 than in the same part of 1942.

Theatre men attribute the gain to varying causes—higher salaries among certain groups, soldiers on furlough, civilians seeking temporary relief from the stress of the times. While gross receipts are up, they say, net profits are lower in many cases, due to high taxes and increased costs.

* * *

THEATRE managers are still seeking a touchstone in types of film which draw best, still haven't found it. Public tastes, however, undergo a notable change in wartime.

"They prefer heavy drama or very slapstick comedy," one member of the trade states. "In wartime there doesn't seem to be any halfway mark."

Realistic drama on war subjects is popular, as is "escapist" entertainment. Drawing-room comedy is on the wane. At present big, lavish musicals are showing a strong upswing, especially those starring "name" bands.

Unexpectedly, downtown theatres in Canadian cities haven't shown lower grosses as a result of gas rationing. People still appear to wish to see pictures when they are new, sometimes staying in town when they have finished work where they would have gone home previously and driven back later.

Suburban theatres find fewer patrons attending from other districts. Apart from downtown attendance, citizens in search of entertainment are roaming less. In increasing numbers they are patronizing those movie houses nearest their homes.

* * *

TWO big problems in maintenance and operation of theatre houses: shortage of labor and no new equipment. While the turnover in ushers has always been large, they are becoming harder and harder to get. Usherettes have taken over in many cases. Theatre chains also report that they are hard put to find managers.

Many have broken a precedent and begun employing women "manageresses." Most have proved highly capable. In general there has been approximately 30 per cent loss in employees to the services and war industry.

The shortage of equipment is more severe, although as yet no theatres have found it necessary to close down. There is reported to be a fair-sized backlog of second-hand projectors, etc., in Canada, but no new machines are being made and parts are turned out in greatly diminished amounts.

Even the Government is stated to be short on 16-millimetre portable equipment for use in educational and recreational film showings for the forces.

While theatre prices have remained constant (they were frozen at the same time as most other Canadian price scales) amusement taxes of 20 per cent have been levied by the Federal Government on all tickets. Higher admission costs have not noticeably affected attendance.

Besides the Dominion levy, all provinces except Ontario have imposed taxes amounting to between 5 per cent and 17 per cent of the original admission price.

* * *

THE cut in profits can be seen in the financial statement for 1942 of the largest chain theatre corporation operating in Canada, Famous Players. In 1942 operating profit was $3.8 millions as against $3 millions in 1941, but net profit was down to $1.1 million from $1.2 million in the earlier period. Taxes in 1941 were $900,000; in 1942 the figure was $1.7 million.

* * *

POST-WAR possibilities in the field of new improvements in movie techniques and styles of presentation are vague but it seems definite that there will be changes.

More and more technicolor pictures are deemed a certainty (at present there is a wartime shortage of some of the materials necessary in their production). Television may after the war be made available in some form of motion picture theatres. Great progress is rumored in this regard.

More use of the educational possibilities of the screen is forecast, and some of the trade foresee motion pictures as a strong instrument in the post-war period for establishing the better understanding which will be necessary between nations.

There is no need for worry about the supply of new pictures. Although British producers have been somewhat curtailed due to the war, they have a backlog of films completed and others in production. Hollywood, despite a shortage of leading men, seems to be getting by, and has other films awaiting release.

Canada Preem For 'Corvette'

"Corvette K-225," Universal's new film of Canadian corvettes in action, will have its world premiere in Canada next month, at a double showing in Ottawa and Halifax. The Royal Canadian Navy, which has watched over the writing and filming of this picture, will probably play a big part in the premiere.

Originally entitled "Corvettes in Action," this Howard Hawks' production has cost Universal $1,000,000, most of the money going into the filming of action shots by director Richard Rosson, who sailed out of a Canadian port on convoy duty to film the real thing. The script was written by Edward Chodorov in collaboration with Canadian navy officer Lieutenant John Royal Sturdy and was okayed at Ottawa by Admiral Percy W. Nelles, Commander in Chief of the Royal Canadian Navy, and Commander Brand, chief naval intelligence officer.

Most of the film was shot last summer on a corvette in the Atlantic. Director Rosson made five convoy trips originally and has just completed a sixth during which he filmed additional material including action centered around the performance of the navy's new anti-aircraft rocket gun.

"Corvette K-225" stars Randolph Scott, Ella Raines, James Brown, Noah Beery, Jr., Barry Fitzgerald, Andy Devine, Fuzzy Knight and Richard Lane. The world premiere here will take place a full week before the picture is publicly screened in New York.

Bill Hart Rides Again

William S. Hart, oldtime Western star, rides again. In conjunction with Roy Roger's "Idaho," the Skouras Victory Theatre, Bayside, N.Y., is booking Hart's "Tumbleweed," with lobby displays announcing "The old and the new King of the Cowboys."

Regal '43-'44 List Juicy

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are five musicals, "Best Foot Forward," "Girl Crazy," "As Thousands Cheer," "DuBarry Was a Lady," and "I Dood It"; two comedies, "Faculty Row" and "The Youngest Profession"; a war story, "Salute to the Marines," and a drama, "Lassie Come Home."

Films now before the cameras include "A Guy Named Joe," a war film with Spencer Tracy and Irene Dunne; "Madame Curie," biographical drama with Greer Garson and Walter Pidgeon; "Song of Russia," a story of wartime Russia with Robert Taylor and Susan Peters; "America," a drama of American industry with Brian Donlevy and Ann Richards; "Whistling in Brooklyn," musical comedy with Red Skelton and Ann Rutherford; "The Cross of Lorraine," story of the Fighting French starring Gene Kelly, Pierre Aumont and Richard Whorf; "Cry Havoc," story of American resistance at Bataan and Corregidor starring Ann Sothern, Margaret Sullavan and Joan Blondell; "The Heavenly Body," a comedy with William Powell and Hedy Lamarr; "The White Cliffs of Dover," a battle drama starring Irene Dunne and Alan Marshall; "Meet the People," musical with Lucille Ball, Dick Powell, Bert Lahr; "Broadway Rhythm," musical with George Murphy and Ginny Simms.

Coming up soon on the production schedule are "The Canterville Ghost," with Charles Laughton; "Dragon Seed," Pearl Buck's story of fighting China; "They Were Expendable," from W. L. White's best-seller; "See Here, Private Hargrove," "Honeyboy," "Mrs. Parkington," "Drivin' Woman," "Malta," "Meet Me in St. Louis," "Quo Vadis," "Gaslight," "Kismet," "Mr. Co-Ed," "The Tale of Two Sisters," "Rationing," and "Here Comes the Band."

Royal, North Bay, Hits 35th Year

Thirty-five years is a long time in the life of anything, according to the conceptions of human beings, who naturally measure things by their own life span. That's why the 35th year of the Royal Theatre, North Bay, Ontario, brought forth a sizeable flow of reminiscences and praise from the people of that town.

Back in the rich and raw days of that mining community the pioneers decided that none should be without culture and entertainment if they had enough money to attract and house it. They had. It was the sort of thing that went on in rough-and-ready places throughout the continent and theatres thus established hold a high place in theatre history. So some North Bay stalwart built a theatre. The first attraction was an opera and the admission price was five dollars.

"I can't remember the name of the opera," Pat McCool, one of the original shareholders of the Royal, said. McCool remembers, though, that the audience, although thrilled with the fact that it was witnessing the first entertainment to be held by the new theatre, was a trifle bored with the formal proceedings of the opera company.

"It all started one morning when I was walking down the street," McCool, one of two surviving original shareholders of the building, recollected.

"While I was strolling down the street, I met John Burke and Tom Reynolds. We chatted for a while and then John and Tom suggested to me that we organize a company and build a theatre. That's all there was to it. The company was organized that day, and all subscriptions toward the building were collected before sundown. We bought the Royal Theatre site from the owners of the old Pacific Hotel, now the St. Regis Hotel."

"There were nine of us, including myself," McCool recalled. "John Burke, Tom Reynolds, John Ferguson, John Lavery, H. W. Angus, A. G. Brownlee, B. Mulligan and John Blanchet all had a hand in the subscribing. Angus was the architect and M. Heily was the builder.

"We collected $35,000 first, and when we found that was not enough, we added another $15,000. Angus and I bought the furnishings. I remember that during the last war the Dumbells played at the Royal. Those were great days for stage shows."

McCool cannot remember actual dates, but believes the original shareholders retained possession of the theatre until 1927, when it was taken over by Angus and Taylor. Later, the Famous Players Theatre Company took over the management of the Royal, to be followed by 20th Century Theatres, which operates about 50 theatres.

The history of the house was reported in the North Bay Daily Nugget, which devoted a special Royal Theatre Supplement of eight pages to the anniversary. Many theatre men and merchants from North Bay and the surrounding district took space to add their congratulations. The theatre men who handed Manager John Kurk, his staff and theatre a printed slap on the back were Max Phillips of the Regent, Sudbury; Gordon Beavis, former manager, now at the Odeon, Kingston; Dave Wolk, Times Theatre, Winnipeg; Tom Mascaro, Capitol, Belleville; Lorne Moore, Melrose, North Bay; Stan Andrews, Broadway, Timmins; and Doug Patterson, Regent, Creighton Mines. Local 634 of the IATSE, whose Bob Babcock is in charge of projection at the Royal, also joined in.

John Kurk, who became manager of the Royal in 1942, has a fine record in the business. He broke into the theatre business in his home town of Winnipeg and became a distributor of foreign films. When the war put the clamp on product Kurk went back to management. Before coming to North Bay he was assistant manager of the Elgin, Ottawa, one of Canada's finest movie houses.

The staff of the theatre, which gives much of its time to the war effort, consists of Leo Taillefer, Rene Taillefer, Jesse Davidson, Hubert Falconi, Henry Gerbasi, Alan Fogul, Mrs. I. Bebee, Mary Turner, assistant manager, John S. Kurk, manager, Sid A. Cooper, Mrs. F. Bailey and R. S. Babcock.

India Has Big Film Industry

The Indian film industry is slightly less than 30 years old, but in this comparatively short space of time has grown at an unusually rapid pace, and it is now estimated that it ranks eighth among India's industries in respect of investment and value of production, says a report from Paul Sykes, Canadian trade commissioner, at Bombay.

The first Indian-made film was made in 1913. Progress achieved in production was slow for some years, but the development of sound films gave considerable impetus to the new industry, since the Indian theatre-going population prefers a much larger element of instrumental and vocal music than is included in the average European film.

It is estimated that at present some 50 studios are in operation throughout India utilized by approximately 150 film producing companies, the more active studios being at Bombay, Poona, Kohlapur, Lahore, Calcutta and Madras. An average of 4,000 artists and technical personnel are employed in the studios annually. The annual expenditure on salaries amounts to some Rs. 2,500,000 (the rupee is valued in exchange at approximately 33.)

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WAR NEWS

from the

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